



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 16, 2013

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### **SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS CALLS ON JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF TRAYVON MARTIN**

In a letter to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chairman Mark Ridley-Thomas today called on the Department of Justice to fulfill its mission and defend the civil rights of Trayvon Martin—and by extension all Americans.

In his letter, the supervisor noted in the letter that George Zimmerman's acquittal by a Florida jury for second degree murder and manslaughter should not absolve him of Trayvon Martin's wrongful death. Federal intervention can do what the Florida court did not do which is to squarely address the issue of race and the role that it played in the wrongful death of young Trayvon Martin.

Federal civil rights statutes allow for the criminal prosecution of ordinary citizens when racial motivation results in bodily injury. The Florida jury was not asked to answer whether Trayvon Martin's fundamental civil right to walk down the street was violated by George Zimmerman. The answer to this question, wrote Chairman Ridley-Thomas, is unfinished business.

"I understand that civil rights enforcement is a critical priority for President Barack Obama's administration," he wrote. "The mission of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division is to protect and defend the civil rights of all individuals. As such, I respectfully request that the Department of Justice fulfill its mission."

Below is the full text of the letter:



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

866 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 / (213) 974-2222

**MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS**

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT

July 16, 2013

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Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.  
Attorney General of the United States  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Re: Call for Criminal Civil Rights Charges against George Zimmerman

Dear Attorney General Holder:

The late Senator Edward Kennedy believed that civil rights remain American's great unfinished business. George Zimmerman's acquittal by a Florida jury for second degree murder and manslaughter should not absolve us of Trayvon Martin's wrongful death. Federal civil rights statutes allow for the criminal prosecution of ordinary citizens when racial motivation results in bodily injury. Federal intervention will do what the Florida court did not do: that is to squarely address the issue of race and the role that it played in the wrongful death of young Trayvon Martin.

The Florida jury was not asked to answer whether Trayvon Martin's fundamental civil right to walk down the street was violated by George Zimmerman. The answer to this question is unfinished business.

I understand that civil rights enforcement is a critical priority for President Barack Obama's administration. The mission of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division is to protect and defend the civil rights of all individuals. As such, I respectfully request that the Department of Justice fulfill its mission and defend the civil rights of Trayvon Martin, and by extension all Americans.

With hope,

**MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS**  
**Chairman of the Board,**  
**Supervisor, Second District**

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